



The Brain Changes All the Time (🧠 A Brain Facts Story)
(5th Grade – 10-11 yrs.)
Think, Pair, Share: Change for the Better



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDES 11-12 (Approx Time: 20-25 min)

Your brain changes with everything that you do so that you can adapt to a changing world. When neuroplasticity happens and changes your brain, this can make you feel good. You can learn and remember information and then use this information to think about new ideas and ways to do things. You could learn how to bake cookies and then you could have a bake sale and donate the money to save animals at the animal shelter. The changes that happen in your brain when you are coming up with new ideas or helping others will also help you feel good – so a win-win situation.

Sometimes the changes that happen in your brain can be bad changes because they allow you to remember bad things which can make you upset and nervous. The best way to deal with all the feelings you are having about negative situations is to talk to someone about it. This way you can change your brain in a way that helps you calm down and helps you to remember all the fun times you had riding your bike. This way you can change your brain in a good way because you will be dealing with the situation.

Materials needed:

- Change for the Better Reflection Sheet (included below) or paper
- Pencils

Preparation needed:

- Print 1 Reflection sheet per student (optional)
- Think of personal examples to share (if necessary for your student(s))
- Determine partner groups (Facilitators working with an individual student will be paired with the student.)

Instructions:

1. In this activity, the student(s) will reflect on both good and bad changes that have occurred in their own brains. They will think about their experiences, share them with a partner, and then with the group if they feel comfortable. Talking about difficult situations often makes people feel better and allows them to start dealing with the situation to make positive changes in their brains.
2. Review with the student(s) that their brains change with everything that they do and every adaptation they make in the world around them. This is because of neuroplasticity. This section of the story focuses on good and bad changes.
3. Pass out the Change for the Better Reflection Sheet
4. Go over the Think section. Provide a personal example if necessary.
5. Give student(s) about 5 minutes to complete that section. They can add more examples if they have them.

6. Once the student(s) have completed their Think section, student(s) will
 - think about what they are comfortable sharing with a partner
 - choose and circle one from the “good” side.
 - choose and circle one from the “bad” side.
 - write down why they wanted to share these examples in the Pair section of the reflection sheet.
 - It could be because they are proud or happy about what happened.
 - It could be because they want to talk to someone about what happened.
 - It could be because it was really upsetting but they worked through it and things are better now.

NOTE: Having it written down will provide focus when they are with their partners. Give them about 5 minutes to do this section.
7. Have student(s) pair up and share for an allotted amount of time.
8. After they have had a chance to share with their partners, have them independently complete the Reflection and Share sections of the sheet.
 - This is for them and will only be shared if they want to and feel comfortable doing so.
 - Give them about 5 minutes to complete these sections.
9. When time is over or all student(s) have finished, allow student(s) who want to share their examples and experiences with the class to do so. If student(s) only want to share one or the other, good or bad, that is fine.
10. In closing, remind the student(s) that their brain changes with everything that they do so that they can adapt to a changing world. When neuroplasticity happens and changes their brain, this can make them feel good or bad. Celebrate when it makes them feel good. Have a plan when it makes them feel bad. Talking about the situation with someone in their support group or using a COPEing mechanism can help them get through the tough times. Knowing how to handle the good and the bad changes will allow them to keep their body and brain happy and healthy.

Change for the Better Reflection Sheet

Name: _____

<p>Think... Brainstorm a list of when neuroplasticity happened, changed your brain, and made you feel good.</p> <p>* * * * * *</p>	<p>Think... Brainstorm a list of when neuroplasticity happened, changed your brain, and allowed you to remember bad things which can made you upset and nervous.</p> <p>* * * * * *</p>
<p>Pair... Why do you want to share this example with your partner?</p>	<p>Pair... Why do you want to share this example with your partner?</p>
<p>Reflection... How did you feel after sharing this experience with your partner? Be specific and detailed.</p>	<p>Reflection... How did you feel after sharing this experience with your partner? Be specific and detailed.</p>
<p>Share... Would you feel comfortable sharing your “good” example with the group? Yes or No</p> <p>If yes, jot your notes here.</p>	<p>Share... Would you feel comfortable sharing your “bad” example with the group? Yes or No</p> <p>If yes, jot your notes here.</p>